

How Should We Live?
Winter 2015
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This is a course about how to live. Anthony Weston defines living ethically as *taking care for the basic needs and legitimate expectations of others as well as our own*. In this class, we will learn how to approach some of the deepest questions and challenges we confront as individuals living among others, with deep care for ourselves, our communities, and the larger world. One central aim is to develop the skills to think critically, clearly, and creatively about some of the most central issues in our lives, including food, sex, money, relationships, religion and more. By exploring abstract philosophical theories of ethics as well as more practical writing by a variety of authors, we will take a serious look at some of the world's deepest problems and our roles in sustaining or solving them, and we'll assume responsibility for the consequences of our actions and inactions.

By the end of the course you should:

- Be able to recognize, and think critically and creatively about, problematic ethical situations in your life and in the world.
- Recognize that your actions and inactions have an impact that extends far beyond you, and take this impact seriously when making choices.
- Be a thoughtful, caring, aware, and proactive consumer, person, citizen, and friend.
- Recognize the complex obstacles there are to creating a better world, including our own biases and habits, and how categories like race, class, and ability influence who we are and how we get along with one another.
- Have developed some practical skills for navigating difficult ethical situations.
- Be familiar with some basic ethical theories and concepts.

Required Text:

The required text for this course is *A 21st Century Ethical Toolbox*, 3rd Edition, by Anthony Weston. All chapter numbers refer to this text. Additional readings may be distributed online or in class.

Readings and Schedule		
1/6	Ch. 1	
1/7	Ch. 2 and 3	
1/8	Ch. 4	
1/9	Ch. 5	Field Trip and Letter Due
1/12	Ch. 6	
1/13	Ch. 7	
1/14	Ch. 8	
1/15	Ch. 9 and 10	
1/16	Ch. 11 and 12	Paper Due
1/19		No Class, MLK Day
1/20	Ch. 13 and 14	
1/21	Ch. 15	
1/22	Ch. 16	
1/23	Ch. 17 and 18	
1/26	Review	
1/27		Final Exercise and Participation Journal Due

Assignments and Due Dates		
Letter	15%	January 9
Paper	30%	January 16
Participation Journal	30%	January 27
Final Exercise	25%	January 27



Letter – 15% – Due January 9

You will write a 2-page letter to anyone you choose, encouraging them to take action or adopt a particular stance on some ethical issue that matters to you. Your letter could be to a corporation, a political representative, an editor of a newspaper, an author, a parent or sibling, or anyone else you choose.

In the letter, you should:

- Urge the reader to take up a particular stance or take some action around an issue that is important to you.
- Provide good, solid reasons for taking up the stance or action you recommend.
- Demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of the topic you are addressing.
- Be specific, clear, concise, and articulate; say something meaningful, important, and original.

Please see the grading rubric in the next section for more information about how the letter will be assessed.

Paper – 30% – Due January 16

In this course, you will write a 5-page essay, due on January 16. The topic, structure, and style of the paper are up to you, but here are a few suggestions:

1. Complete any of the writing exercises described in the *Toolbox*. Pay special attention to the “Using Your Tools” sections and the questions at the end of each chapter. The text provides dozens of provocative questions and writing prompts that are worth exploring. You could respond to any of these, or you could just use them to generate other creative writing ideas of your own.
2. Explain and respond to any of the guest essays in the *Toolbox*. These are listed in the “Table of Contents.” Your writing can be modeled on any of the essay styles found in the text. Your paper might be an argumentative essay, objecting to some stance that a guest author adopts, or you might extend the writing that is included in the text, taking up the voice of the author, for example.
3. Write about any topic that comes up in class. There will be dozens: sex, life, aging, youth, relationships, love, food, exercise, health, school, honesty, etc. You could explain why an issue that is normally divisive shouldn’t be, what our obligations are surrounding some important issue, how we might attempt some constructive change on a particular issue, or anything else you think of.

Your paper will be graded according to the following rubric:

Clarity	Is the essay clearly organized and concise? Have you made good use of limited space? Do you use paragraph breaks effectively, to enhance the structure of the essay? Is it easy to see how each sentence and paragraph fits into the essay as a whole? Do your ideas flow in a natural order?
Depth	Have you treated the topic with adequate complexity? Does your essay demonstrate sophisticated thinking on the subject?
Creativity	Does your essay demonstrate original and creative thinking? Is it unique? Does it show that you have thought “outside of the box?”
Effectiveness	Is it clear what your aims are in the essay and have these been met? Do you have a specific purpose in writing, and is this purpose communicated to your reader? If the essay is an argumentative essay, is it argued well? Are your arguments strong? Are you meaningfully invested in the project and does this show?

Please do not hesitate to seek assistance in writing the paper. You can drop by during my office hours, arrange to meet with me by appointment, or visit the Writing Center in Belk Library.

Participation Journal – 30% – Due January 27

You will keep a journal throughout this course. Your journal will include the following types of materials.

1. Often, at the end of a class, I will assign a short reflective writing exercise, which you will complete in your journal.
2. Any additional assignments that are given in class, even those that I take up and return, will also be collected in your journal. All work you complete in this class should be collected in your journal.
3. Sometimes you will complete an assignment in class, evaluate your work by yourself, and collect the final product in your journal.
4. Your journal will contain written work related to field trips.
5. You are also encouraged to collect other relevant materials, such as news articles related to class discussions, email conversations, and anything else you think is relevant to the work you undertake in this course. This course is largely about your growth as a person throughout the term, and your journal should document this growth, both within the classroom and outside of it. You may include any additional materials you'd like in your journal.
6. The second week in this course will be a "Challenge Week," in which you take up a personal challenge that helps you answer the question of how to live. Much of the journaling you do during this week will be related to your challenge. More information about Challenge Week will be distributed.
7. In your journal, you will also keep track of your attendance on an attendance sheet, noting any absences and the reasons for them.
8. During the final week of class, you will complete a more thorough self-assessment, reviewing the materials in your journal and assessing your participation in the class overall. You will be given more detailed instructions for how to complete this assessment at a later date. The assessment will be included in your journal.

Your journal should be organized neatly, meaningfully and effectively, to help a reader understand your participation and growth in the class overall. Your journal grade will be determined by your demonstrated growth and participation in the class, as well as your ability to meaningfully engage with course material. Your completed journal is due at the beginning of the final exam period, January 27.

Final Exercise – 25% -- January 27

We will have a final exercise in this class to evaluate your comprehensive understanding of course material. More information will be distributed.

Amy's Contact Info

amyglaser@gmail.com (I DO NOT check my elon.edu email. Please do not email me there!)

Office Hours

My office hours are Monday and Tuesday from 11:30am-12:30pm, unless otherwise noted. I am also available by appointment. My office is in the philosophy suite in Spence Pavilion.

Honor Code

Students are expected to comply with the Elon Academic Honor Code, which can be found in the Elon Student Handbook: <http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/handbook/>. Suspected violations of the honor code will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Any violation may result in a failing grade for the course. Violations specifically covered by academic honor code policies include: plagiarism, cheating, lying, stealing and the facilitation of another's dishonesty. Multiple violations will normally result in a student's temporary suspension from the University.

Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to visit the Writing Center this semester for assistance with your paper and other writing for this course. The Center's trained staff can assist you in every stage of the process, and your papers will almost certainly be stronger with their input. The main Writing Center is in Belk Library. For more info, visit <http://www.elon.edu/writingcenter>.

Special Needs

Please speak to me (or email) if you have any special needs or concerns regarding your participation in this class. If you are a student with a documented disability, please register with Disabilities Services in the Duke Building, Room 108 (278-6500) for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. I want to ensure that everyone in this course feels comfortable participating and has the support required to do well and to get the most out of the assignments and the material covered. http://www.elon.edu/web/academics/support/disabilities_services.xhtml

Written Work

Your paper and letter should be typed, double-spaced, and stapled. Be sure to include your name and, for the paper, a title. Journal entries may be hand-written. Quotations or near quotations that are not cited will be considered plagiarism and a violation of the honor code. If you are sharing someone else's thoughts or ideas, be sure to make this clear! I am required to report any suspected violations of the honor code. Assignments not turned in at the time they are due will be penalized 10 points immediately, and 10 points for each day after that that they are late. Do not wait to print your paper until 10 minutes before class. This is one way to make it likely that your paper will not be turned in on time!

Attendance

Given the condensed nature of Winter Term, attendance at each class session is essential. Your Participation Journal grade will be penalized 10% for your first unexcused absence, 20% for the second, and so on. If you have to miss class for an excused absence, please discuss it with me, and note it in your journal!